

# WILMINGTON DISTRICT NEWS ONLINE

FEBRUARY 2007

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Lester Gaugh, a deck equipment operator on SAW's Debris Boat Snell, chats with USACE Sergeant Major Robert Winzenreid across from Wilmington's waterfront on the Cape Fear River. (Heusinkveld Photo)

## TOP USACE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER LOOKS OUT FOR "TROOPS"

The non-commissioned officer or NCO is known as "the backbone of the Army." They're doers, responsible for carrying out orders given by commissioned officers or higher ranking NCOs to enlisted Soldiers.

They're also responsible for a Soldier's health and welfare. Within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civilian workforce the "troops" are wage-grade employees and park rangers. They have an ear when USACE's top NCO, Command Sergeant Major Robert Winzenreid pays a visit.



Winzenreid is the 9th USACE Sergeant Major.

"I spend most of my time out in the field talking to people," he said. "I'm able to bring their issues and concerns right to the Chief of Engineers to let him know what those issues are that affect the workforce. Wherever you go in the Army, there's always a Sergeant Major who's responsible for going out to find solutions to problems and concerns to see what we can do to help."

CSM Winzenreid has had a well-rounded career. Before his current assignment in Washington as the ninth USACE Command Sergeant Major, he was

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## UP FRONT

# BUDGET PROSPECTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 07-08 STILL TAKING SHAPE

On February 5th, President Bush released his FY08 budget. COL Pulliam and I briefed our Congressional staff and key stakeholders on the budget that afternoon, while PAO sent out the attached press release to our congressional staff and media. The budget is similar to what the President proposed in FY07. Key projects contributing to national priorities were well funded - Roanoke, JH Kerr Rehab and Neuse River Basin study - among some here in Wilmington. Others were not funded as has happened in the past - shore protection studies and projects, shallow draft inlets, and Wilmington Harbor Deepening project.



Chris Brayman

Please keep in mind this is only the beginning of a journey through the budget process. It is certainly not

a signal to reprioritize your work based on the proposed budget. The Project Managers along with their Project Delivery Teams and Programs staff will develop "capabilities" (or what we could execute if funded) for each project. The Commander, Jim Medlock and I will visit all our congressional representatives at the end of February to discuss the FY08 budget and our capabilities in greater detail. The individual members will then decide which projects they will ask the Energy & Water Appropriations Subcommittee to include in the House and Senate bills based on input from their constituents and stakeholders who often also visit the Congressional members. Historically, Congress has added and funded many more projects than is in the President's budget.

The budget process takes a long time. And we are still not certain of our specific FY 2007 budget. At the time of publication, we do have a

joint Congressional resolution passed and signed by President Bush on 15 February 2007, which funds us through the end of FY 2007. However, we are still awaiting guidance on specific funding levels for individual projects, since this legislation allocated funding only at the Appropriations category level, leaving the decision-making about specific projects to agency leadership.

The bottom line is that we all should keep working, ensuring customer priorities are met and doing the good work you all do!

**If someone contacts you about the budget process or you have additional questions, please see Jim Medlock, the Project Manager for your PDT, Penny Schmitt or myself. Please take time to review the full budget story included in this newsletter on**

***Pages Six and Seven.***

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**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
**Wilmington District**





## SHERRY GAYLOR CONTINUES HER ROLE AS DEDICATED MEMBER OF GULF REGION CENTRAL



**Editor's note— Former Wilmington District member Sherry Gaylor, Chief of Contracting for Gulf Region Central in Iraq, is on her third overseas deployment and is unwavering in her commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq. The following article and pictures were published in the Gulf Region Division's newsletter.**

Gulf Region Central hosted a two-hour seminar February 20th attended by 15 Iraqi contractor5s representing 13 construction companies at the Mahmudiyah Civil Military Operations Center. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview on regulations and practices to bidding on USACE-level contracts.

GRC's Chief of Contracting, Sherry Gaylor, led the discussions assisted by Victory Area Office South Officer in Charge (OIC) Major Steve Martinnelli, and GRC HQ Bilingual Bicultural Advisor Shirwan Awan.

Gaylor pointed out that access to the internet was a critical first step as all tenders were advertised there on the Iraqi Business Center website. She briefed the contracting process from the statement of work, Advertisement, Site Visit, Amendments, to the receiving of proposals, and awarding the contract. Her presentation was entitled, "Writing a Successful Proposal."

Gaylor emphasized the critical need to meet bid deadline re-

quirements along with the importance of past performance evaluations. She then went on step by step explaining the various sections of a solicitation offer and concluded her remarks answering questions.

MAJ Martinnelli presented his role and responsibilities in solicitations, project management and payment. He told those in attendance that by "being here today it demonstrates your willingness to learn professionally how you can become an important part in the building of Iraq." ■



## LOW-VISIBILITY INSPECTION OF COMPLETED WORKS PROGRAM SUDDENLY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Penny Schmitt

Just as the events 9/11/2001 had long term effects on attitudes toward security throughout the nation, the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had long term effects on our vigilance about flood control structures.

Wilmington District, historically in the eye of hurricanes, has a good track record for keeping close watch on flood control structures. For many years our District Dam Safety Program enjoyed the leadership of now-retired Boyd Alig. Today, Don Smith, of our Geotech section, is the Regional Engineering Center Dam Safety Coordinator, and Ann Hinds, also of Geotech, is the Wilmington District Dam Safety Coordinator. Together, they lead the vital program to monitor condition and structural integrity of our five major flood control structures: John H. Kerr Dam, Philpott Dam, Falls Dam, B. Everett Jordan Dam, and W. Kerr Scott Dam. The structures are monitored year in and year out, and the District Dam Safety Committee meets regularly to stay current with all conditions at our dams.

Beyond those obvious behemoths on the North Carolina and Virginia landscapes, the Wilmington District also has oversight of a significant number of other flood control structures. Some of these were actually built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or with our assistance. However, nearly all are owned by county or municipal governments, who are charged with maintaining them so that they will continue to offer the flood protection their designers intended.

Provided these projects are properly maintained and able to perform the



**Pretty landscape? Maybe, but this is the slope of a levee that has been invaded by shrubs and even small trees. The root systems allow water to penetrate and weaken the levee. (Photos by Ann Hinds)**

jobs they were built to do, they stay eligible to receive public funds to complete repairs to the original standard under Public Law 84-99, should they be damaged by flooding. In turn, property protected by such a facility enjoys a reduced rate for flood insurance, provided the facility gets a ‘passing’ grade.

That’s where our District comes into the picture. The people who serve on the ‘Inspection of Completed Works’ team regularly inspect the 36 active facilities we have under our purview. They report any deficiencies to the project sponsors, who are expected to repair them in timely fashion. The program, formerly carried out by our Emergency Operations staff, now is conducted under the leadership of our Geotech Section Chief, Greg Griffith

and his team, with assistance from Carl Smalley, of Emergency Operations.

“We feel that the combination of structural and geotechnical expertise on Greg’s team, and the connection to county and municipal emergency managers on my team offers the best skills to make sure we support communities in caring for these important facilities,” said Emergency Operations Manager Ron Stirrat.

Wilmington District’s most famous ‘completed work’ is probably the Princeville Dike, a sizeable levee built to protect the historic town of Princeville, N.C., from the ravages of the Tar River. In 1999, Hurricane Floyd so overwhelmed the Tar that the dike was breached near a railroad cut, the town was inundated, and many homes and



businesses were flooded. Since then, Public Law 84-99 funds have been used to restore the dike, and a better closure for the gap at the railroad cut has been designed and put in place. Edgecombe County is responsible for maintaining the dike.

Other notable works include the Deep Creek levee at the tiny town of Speed, North Carolina, which also was affected by Hurricane Floyd, and levees built to protect municipal wastewater treatment plants in Danville and Roanoke Virginia and Clinton, N.C. The Ararat Levee and flood wall protects part of the city of Mount Airy, N.C. Still other levees, some in less than perfect condition, were built to protect croplands.

What causes these structures to deteriorate? “The problems can be anything from invasion by tree roots, that provide a path for water to undermine the levee, to actual breaches in a levee caused by activities like logging, or inappropriate loading of material

stored against flood walls,” ICW program manager Greg Griffith said.

Of some of the flood control works that no longer provide the intended protection, Griffith said: “Our responsibility is to make it known to the sponsoring county or town that the structure will not function as intended. Then it becomes a local decision: is it worth spending the public funds required to return the project to its full function? In some cases, obviously those where life and property are no longer a significant risk factor, and repair costs are high, it may not be worth it to the local government to restore the structure.”

Of course such a decision can have the unpleasant effect of rendering formerly protected areas more flood-prone and far less insurable. That’s why Corps Headquarters has made a decision to give sponsoring counties and communities a year to complete repairs before declaring levee and flood wall projects rated unsatisfactory

in 2006 as “inactive.” And that’s why levees and other structures have been in the national news.

National attention recently focused on the little – known structures because the Corps’ nationwide intensification of inspections and reporting of

*“The problems can be anything from invasion by tree roots, that provide a path for water to undermine the levee, to actual breaches in a levee caused by activities like logging, or inappropriate loading of material stored against flood walls.”*

**Greg Griffith**

deficiencies has become more widely known and scrutinized. In January of 2007, USA Today newspaper published a listing of 146 levees and other flood control structures nationwide deemed by Corps inspectors to be in some way deficient, and to put property and even lives at risk of flooding.

One of these 146 facilities is a levee protecting the Waste Water Treatment Plant for the City of Roanoke, Virginia, and falls under the jurisdiction of the Wilmington District Inspection of Completed Works program.

“We expect the deficiencies at this site to be resolved within the year the Corps Director of Civil works has granted as a grace period,” Griffith said. “The City of Roanoke and the Western Virginia Water Authority incurred the deficiency rating because they are in the process of increasing the level of flood protection for the facility. Their construction project has temporarily compromised the integrity of the original structure, but we expect it to be back on the list of facilities in good standing when the improvement project is completed later in 2007.” ■



This flood wall is being weighed upon by somebody's equipment. The safety of the structure can easily be compromised in such a situation.

## WILMINGTON DISTRICT'S FISCAL YEAR 2008 BREAKDOWN BY THE NUMBERS

"We know what question was uppermost in the minds of many of our colleagues, partners, and sponsors when the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2008 was released today," said Colonel John E. Pulliam, Jr., Commander of the Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "That question is, 'what happened to the project closest to my life?'"

Decisions about funding were based on criteria that emphasized:

- \* High return on investment.
- \* Key factors such as:
  - \* Significant benefits like reduced risk to human life and enhanced safety, maintaining critical infrastructure, or providing key environmental benefits
- \* Ability to complete the project in Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08)

"Those are the kinds of fiscally responsible criteria we know are vital for our nation, although this district, like others, will be challenged because a number of studies and projects were not recommended in the FY08 budget. We know that this will be disappointing news to some

of our partners," Pulliam acknowledged.

On the other hand, the Neuse River Basin environmental restoration basin-wide study benefited from the criteria above with a budget request of \$554,000. "This is exceptional news for our study sponsor, the state of North Carolina, because the study could be completed in FY08," Pulliam said.

"Further, the Roanoke River Upper Basin Flood Damage Reduction project will receive \$10.15 million in federal funding because of its vital urban flood damage reduction functions and reduction of risk to human life. The good news is that this level of funding will allow significant construction progress on this project in FY08."

Overall, The Fiscal Year 2008 budget transmitted to Congress includes \$4.971 billion in new federal funding for the Civil Works program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Of that sum, a total of just over \$79 million is slated for a variety of projects to be carried out in

Wilmington District, which takes in most of the state of North Carolina and portions of south-central Virginia. In addition to the budget allocations described below, Wilmington is expected to receive about \$5 million in funding for its Regulatory program.

### A COMPLETE SUMMARY OF BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR THE WILMINGTON DISTRICT'S AUTHORIZED PROJECTS IS LISTED HERE:

#### GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Wilmington District was allocated \$1,004,000 for General Investigations. This covers projects that are in either the study or development phase. The projects that received budget allocations for FY08 include:

**\$554,000** for the **Neuse River Basin Study**

**\$300,000** for the **John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir (VA & NC) Section 216 Study**

**\$150,000** for **Currituck Sound Study**

## FY 08 BUDGET CON'T

## CONSTRUCTION

## GENERAL:

In the Construction General Account, which funds the actual building of projects that have completed the study process, the Wilmington District was allocated \$23,150,000 for the following projects:

**\$13,000,000** to continue the major **rehabilitation of John H. Kerr Hydropower facilities (VA & NC)**

**\$10,150,000** for **continued construction of a flood damage reduction project on the Roanoke River Upper Basin (VA)**

OPERATIONS and  
MAINTENANCE:

Operations and Maintenance of existing projects received budget allocations totaling \$55,474,000 to maintain and operate projects within the Wilmington District.

**\$4,900,000** for the **Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway**

**\$588,000** for the **Cape Fear River above Wilmington (Locks and Dams)**

**\$7,600,000** for **Manteo (Shallowbag Bay) including Oregon Inlet**

**\$65,000** for **Masonboro Inlet and Connecting Channels**

**\$5,500,000** for **Morehead City Harbor**

**\$500,000** for **New River Inlet critical harbor of refuge**

**\$650,000** for **Rollison Channel**

**\$900,000** for **Silver Lake Harbor**

**\$11,200,000** for **Wilmington Harbor**

**\$675,000** for **project condition surveys**

**\$1,817,000** for **B. Everett Jordan Dam and Lake, NC**

**\$2,013,000** for **Falls Dam and Lake, NC**

**\$11,102,000** for **John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir, VA and NC**

**\$4,875,000** for **Philpott Lake, VA**

**\$3,050,000** for **W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir, NC**

**\$39,000** for **inspection of completed works (small flood control facilities)**

## UNBUDGETED

## PROJECTS:

“Projects and activities that were not allocated continued budgetary funding for FY08 will progress as far as FY07 funding resources permit,” said Col. Pulliam. These projects include:

- Wilmington Harbor 96 ACT, Channel Deepening, navigation
- Brunswick County Beaches, shore protection
- Bogue Banks, shore protection
- Dare County Beaches (Bodie Island), shore protection
- Hatteras and Ocracoke Islands, shore protection
- Surf City / North Topsail beach, shore protection
- West Onslow Beach, shore protection
- Philpott Lake, VA, Section 216 study, environmental restoration
- Tar River and Pamlico Sound, river basin study
- Operations and Maintenance for Coastal Inlets including:
  - o Bogue Inlet
  - o Carolina Beach Inlet
  - o Lockwoods Folly Inlet
  - o New Topsail Inlet and Channels ■



## USACE CSM CON'T

assigned to the Engineer Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, as the Brigade Command Sergeant Major, and participated as a member of Task Force Danger in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II in Tikrit, Iraq. Although he's spent the majority of his Army career taking care of issues that affect Soldiers, he sees similarities between them and the USACE Civilians he regularly visits.

"I tell people that every once in a while I need to reach out and touch some green," he said with a smile. "I go



On board the Survey Vessel Gillette CSM Winzenried talks about U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Navigation with SAW's Chief of Navigation Roger Bullock and Operations Chief Bob Sattin. (Not pictured.)

back and visit Soldiers just to see what's going on in the tactical side. But I tell you...our Civilian employees are just as motivated about their projects as Soldiers are of their various missions. When I go out and talk to people like our park rangers about their projects I get the same level of motivation. It amazes me. There's much more emphasis on expertise in the Corps, much more focus; whereas Soldiers have to know a wide variety of things. But that level of enthusiasm at our projects and on our vessels is outstanding."

When asked, CSM Winzenried tells Soldiers and others about opportunities within USACE. He sometimes visits colleges to recruit students, but he feels the best representa-

tives for selling the Corps are within our own ranks.

"I really think everybody has a part to play looking for people who have what it takes to be a part of this organization. The demographics have changed a lot in how younger people view jobs. I think the sur-

veys show they do three years then they move out and very rarely do they stay with one company or one organization for their entire career. We have to recognize that. But I think that once people come to work for the Corps most of them end up wanting to stay. So that's a pretty good sign that we're on the right path of keeping quality people." ■



Captain Billy Cuthrell of the Debris Boat Snell discusses pay issues with USACE CSM Robert Winzenried.

***"I'm able to bring issues and concerns right to the Chief of Engineers to let him know what those issues are that affect the workforce."***





# IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR REENLISTMENT CEREMONY FOR SAD COMMANDER & HIS DAUGHTER IN LAW AT FT BRAGG

South Atlantic Division Commander Brigadier General Joe Schroedel took time out during his visit to Fort Bragg on 23 February to reenlist his daughter in law, Specialist Natasha Schroedel for her reenlistment ceremony. Specialist Schroedel is an Army lithographer (Military Occupational Skill 21 Lima) and is assigned to the



**ARMY STRONG.**

100<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion at Fort Bragg. Her husband is Specialist Matt Schroedel, a Special

Forces Soldier who is also assigned at Fort Bragg. Natasha chose the prominent landmark statue of "Iron Mike" as her reenlistment ceremony site. The 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion is commanded by former Wilmington District Deputy Commander Lieutenant Colonel Harvey "Bud" Jones. ■



**Photos courtesy Sergeant Lori Luttmann, 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Reenlistment.**

## COMMITMENT TO MINORITY STUDENTS EARNS CARTER NATION BLACK ENGINEER AWARD

*"It's amazing to see the advancements by students. Their self-esteem can improve by somebody saying, 'Hey, I care about you. Why don't you go to college?' It gives me a great feeling when I can help a student achieve a responsible goal."*

Tony Carter knows the value of a good education. The son of a sharecropper with only a seventh-grade education and a mother who was only able to finish the 10th grade, he gained an appreciation for hard work at an early age weeding cucumber patches from sunup to sundown. His grandmother encouraged his education, giving him a quarter for every A on his report card.

"Once the desire to make A's was instilled, the quarters were no longer my primary focus and I continued to strive for all A's through high school," he recalled.

With a solid foundation in his formative years, Carter headed to college and received a scholarship at North Carolina A&T State University majoring in architectural engineering. After graduation, he was offered five different jobs and in 1978 chose the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Not forgetting his roots and passion for learning and helping others, he was encouraged by Wilmington District EEO officers to recruit minority engineers. Today, he leads ROCAME, the Re-

gion O Council for the Advancement of Minorities in Engineering. His selfless service to the organization earned him the Black Engineer of the Year Award for Affirmative Action in Government.

"ROCAME is really taking off. One of the major employers in Wilmington is hiring two engineers a day, and they anticipate hiring a few engineers a day next year," he said. "With that kind of activity in the private sector there's a big push to get more engineers into schools and graduate them to fill jobs. ROCAME is playing a great role in that by stimulating more kids' interest in engineering and getting them into and graduating from college."

Carter said ROCAME members work with students who show an aptitude for science and math. To get them into college they've organized industry-sponsored scholarships and volunteer as mentors.

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**"I can provide guidance and with that guidance there's no telling what these students can do. "**

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"But mainly we just want to introduce kids to the world of engineering and let them know that a lot of their world is based on engineering. The kids who are interested in engineering are the ones that usually get hired immediately out of college."



**Tony Carter is president of the Region O Council for the Advancement of Minorities in Engineering.**

Carter feels potential minority engineering students need a push from ROCAME as well as from leaders in their communities. Growing up he didn't have that luxury.

"I was fortunate to get things to fall into place without any guidance. I can provide guidance and with that guidance there's no telling what these students can do. By the time today's students are in middle school they've already been encouraged to go into fields like engineering. An engineer is much respected in the community. As an engineer you can help better your world. You can create things that make life better." ■



# SOUL FOOD EXTRAVAGANZA FUELS DISTRICT CELEBRATION

By Penny Schmitt

Recipes that started out in times of slavery, scarcity and 'make do' now are part of the abundance of African American . . . no, Southern, . . . oh heck, no! part of *All-American* feasts.

Wilmington District team members proved that with a loaded table of delicious, traditional soul food during Black History Month, treating one another to a memorable feast. On a long table decorated

with a beautiful table cloth from Kenya, the array of pots and casserole dishes was a formidable invitation to all.

"What we promised was just a 'taste'," said Renita McNeill, District EEO officer. "We didn't expect so much food!"

The mouthwatering, finger-lickin' delicious menu included: Shrimp and grits, red beans and rice, hoppin' john, ham, fried chicken and wings, collards, corn

bread, butter beans, macaroni and cheese, stewed tomatoes, potato salad, banana pudding, sweet potato pie . . . . and more.

The committee that prepared for the event produced recipe leaflets for many of the main dishes, so that folks could take them home and try out the classics for themselves.

Want to try a recipe for yourself? How about finishing a Sunday dinner with some sweet potato pie? The recipe leaflet says:

"Blacks in America adopted the sweet potato. They praised it, raised it up, and transformed its sweet orange self into beautiful dishes, no doubt, because it reminded them of the yam—a tuberous starchy vegetable that is a staple in Africa." ■

## Sweet Potato Pie Recipe

*Crust for a 9-inch pie*

*2 cups mashed cooked sweet potatoes*

*½ cup granulated sugar*

*½ cup brown sugar*

*2 eggs, beaten*

*1 cup light cream*

*½ tsp ground ginger*

*½ tsp ground mace*

*Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Mix the sweet potatoes well with the sugars, and beat in all the remaining ingredients. Pour into the pie shell and bake 10 minutes at 425, then reduce the heat to 350 degrees and bake another 30 to 35 minutes, or until the custard is set.*



Wilmington District members indulge in a free buffet offered as part of Black History Month celebration.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEATURE

# THE 761ST TANK BATTALION: FIGHTING THE ENEMY, BEATING STEREOTYPES



LTG George Patton awards the Silver Star to Private Ernest A. Jenkins . (Patton Museum Photos)

***“Men, you’re the first Negro tankers to ever fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren’t good. I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don’t care what color you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sons of b\*\*\*\*hes. Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all, your race is looking forward to you. Don’t let them down and damn you, don’t let me down!”***

Those gruff, yet encouraging words from Third Army Commander Lieutenant General George Patton in October of 1944 to an all-black tank battalion helped spur them towards their role in the de-

feat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Nicknamed “The Black Panthers”, the Soldiers of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion fought racial stereotypes of the time and went on to earn the Nation’s respect and an honored place in military and American history.

“The 761st Tank Battalion was one of the most effective tank units to participate in hostilities during WWII,” stated author and NBA legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. “Their entry into the European theatre was marked by one crucial success after another.”

Abdul-Jabbar, who authored the book *Brothers in Arms: The Epic Story of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion*, WWII’s *Forgotten Heroes*, sheds light on the history of the unit.

“Certainly, they were General Patton’s most effective unit,” he said. “Because they were a replacement unit, they were shifted around to different areas quite often. In every instance, their presence meant that competent tank support had arrived. The commander of the 17th Airborne, General John Miley, felt that he was able to send many more of his Soldiers home alive as a direct result of the effective support of the 761st.”

Abdul-Jabbar was inspired to learn about the 761<sup>st</sup> after watching a documentary in 1992 about a

WWII black tank unit. He also became interested in the struggle of black veterans “to gain the recognition they deserved.” His own father, F.L. “Al” Alcindor was trained as an artilleryman at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, but served his country stateside. The general belief at the time was that African Americans would not be effective in combat arms units and held mostly support roles. However, Major General J. Lesley McNair, chief of the U.S. Army ground forces, felt that black fighting men would be just as valuable as white fighting men in defeating the Axis powers and pushed to have them serve in combat units.

The 761<sup>st</sup> was formed on March 15, 1942 and was activated on April 1, 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. By October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1944, it landed on Omaha Beach in France, the first of the black armored units committed to combat. According to Army historical records, the unit had six white and 30 black officers and 676 enlisted men. The Army documented that “the battalion entered France with greater confidence than most Negro units could muster upon entry into a theater of operations. It had gained assurance during the training period at Camp Hood, Texas, where it had been told by higher commanders, including the Second Army’s Lieutenant General Ben Lear, that it had a superior record





Tank Commander Harvey Woodard assesses terrain near Nancy, France in November of 1944.

and that much was expected of it. The 761st firmly believed that it owed its existence and survival and, therefore, a top performance, to Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair."

Confident in its abilities and having a feeling of acceptance, the 761<sup>st</sup> joined the 26th Division of XII Corps of the Third Army. Division commander, Major General

Willard S. Paul, welcomed the battalion on October 31<sup>st</sup>; "I am damned glad to have you with us. We have been expecting you for a long time, and I am sure you are going to give a good account of yourselves. I've got a big hill up there that I want you to take, and

I believe that you are going to do a great job of it." After another successful battle word spread about the 761<sup>st</sup> and just two days later Patton visited the battalion and further challenged the 761<sup>st</sup> Soldiers with his short speech.

The 761st's work with the 26th Division in November of 1944 received special commendation from Major General Paul, in addition to

the commendation that went to all units of the 26th Division and XII Corps:

*"I consider the 761st Tank Battalion to have entered combat with such conspicuous courage and success as to warrant special commendation. The speed with which they adapted themselves to the front line under most adverse weather conditions, the gallantry with which they faced some of Germany's finest troops, and the confident spirit with which they emerged from their recent engagements in the vicinity entitle them surely to consider themselves of the veteran 761st. Your battalion has supported this division with great bravery under the most adverse weather and terrain conditions. You have my sincere wish that success may continue to follow your endeavors."*

The 761<sup>st</sup> would continue its onslaught of German units through the end of the war. The tank battalion's mark in history slowly began to fade until its actions were summed up in a Presidential Unit Citation awarded in 1978;

*"Throughout this period of combat, the courageous and professional actions of the members of the 'Black Panther' battalion, coupled with their indomitable fighting spirit and devotion to duty, reflect great credit on the 761st Tank Battalion, the United States Army, and this Nation."* ■



A tank from Able Company, 761st Tank Battalion crosses the Seille River in France on November 9th, 1944.

Article written and researched by Hank Heusinkveld. Special thanks to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Productions, MAJ Elizabeth Robbins of Army Public Affairs and Bill Harris, SAW Safety Officer.

# WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS

WITH BARBARA EKELUND

Welcome to Barbara Ekelund who is new to the Wilmington area, having moved here from Stratford, CT.

She was born and raised

on Staten Island, NY, got her undergrad degree in Philosophy from the University of Rochester and her Master of Library Science from Southern Connecticut State University. She is now living just north of Ogden Park with her Bassett Hound, George. She has a 22 year old daughter living in California. Her hobbies include reading (of course!), gardening, and bicycling for fun.



## Federal Spending

[www.fedspending.org/](http://www.fedspending.org/)

Ever wonder where the government spends our money? A joint project of OMB Watch with support from the Sunlight Foundation, this site offers easy access to information on federal spending with data from the Federal Procurement Data Center and the Federal Assistance Award Data System. Searches can be done on contracts or grants and by agency with data going back to 2000. It offers several report formats for varying levels of detail. Top contractors for the many agencies and the total Top 100

contractors listing are also easily found. For instance, within the state of North Carolina in FY2005, there were 5,224 companies contracted with total funding of \$4,545,795,401, amounting to 1.3% of all federal dollars awarded that fiscal year.

## American Rivers

[www.americanrivers.org](http://www.americanrivers.org)

If you want to know what organizations are saying who think the Corps' policies and programs need a big overhaul, this is a great situational awareness site. A national non-profit conservation organization, American Rivers is dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers and the variety of life they sustain for people, fish, and wildlife. Their website tracks a multitude of issues concerning U.S. rivers, lakes, streams, dams, et al. One area they feature is covering USACE reform. Recently they had an article, Congress Poised to Make Over the Corps of Engineers, on the possible effects of the Feingold-McCain Bill.

## Climate Science

[www.climatescience.gov/default.htm](http://www.climatescience.gov/default.htm)

A resource about the U.S. Climate Change Science Program. Overseen by the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, the National Economic Council and the OMB, the program integrates federal research on

global climate change. This site's most interesting feature is under the "New" header: the latest information from working groups, conference proceedings, and regulatory sources about climate change research is listed with links to the various source documents.

## The Mayo Clinic

[www.mayoclinic.com/](http://www.mayoclinic.com/)

One of my favorite sites is the Mayo Clinic. Whether it's a condition, disease, new medicine or whatever, I go here for the most credible health information. Toolbars offer information on: Diseases & Conditions; Drugs & Supplements; Treatment Decisions; Healthy Living; Health Tools; and, it even offers an email "Ask a Mayo Clinic Specialist" feature that will respond to selected health questions. The information is presented in accessible language and often has helpful explanatory graphics. At the site, you can sign up for Housecall, a free weekly newsletter.

## Just for fun!

Star Trek Inspirational posters!

Rejoice! Die hard Trekkers can download posters for their cubicles.

[http://echosphere.net/star\\_trek\\_insp/star\\_trek\\_insp.html](http://echosphere.net/star_trek_insp/star_trek_insp.html)

**SEARCH TIP:** If you aren't sure of the phrase or are missing a word that you want to search with, try using a wildcard. In Google, the wildcard is "\*" and can be used to represent a word or part of a word.



## REACHING OUT AND CORPS FAMILY NEWS

**Doug Greene** passed the written element and five-word-per-minute Morse Code element of Technician Class amateur radio license application. This was the last Morse Code exam offered because it won't be a requirement any more.

Bailey Williams, 5th grade daughter of **Greg Williams**, was one of the New Hanover County Science Fair winners with her project "Reading Efficiency and Effectiveness With Distractions." She'll participate in the District Science Fair at UNCW on 3 March 2007.

**Rosemary Burke's** niece Julia Morgan Adams (**below**) was born on 29 January. She weighed in at seven pounds, three ounces and was 21 inches long.



Hoggard HS junior Nate Porter, son of **Elizabeth Porter**, swims for Waves of Wilmington and placed in two relays and in an individual event in the 4A NC High School Eastern Regional Swim Championships. He advanced to the finals of the 4A NC High School State Swim Championships held at NC State. The following week, as a USA Swim club swimmer, he competed and made the finals in the NC Senior Swim Championships in the butterfly and back-stroke events.



### REACHING OUT

Wilmington District Society of American Military Engineers President Virginia Rynk flips through test papers to grade at the annual Math Counts competition at Murray Middle School. Also grading papers are Carroll Niesen, back left, Melissa Blackburn-Walter, and Shane Jones, front right. Not pictured; Doug Greene and John Hazelton.

### Varnam Receives de Fleury Medal

Recently retired former Chief of Navigation Howard Varnam, right, gets a warm felt congratulations for his de Fleury Medal from Keith Fulcher, Chief Engineer of the Debris Boat Snell. Varnam received the de Fleury Medal from District Commander Colonel John Pulliam during his retirement ceremony. The de Fleury Medal is named after the 1700s French engineer Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, who volun-

teered to serve with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain. The de Fleury Medal is awarded to those individuals who have provided significant contributions and support to Army engineering.

